'If I Didn't Care' . . . Ink Spots Star Tells of the Glamor

By CLAUDIA CHAMBERLAIN
Times Staff Writer

VERNON—It was all there. The pictures of the original Ink Spots in front of a monument in some state. Only you couldn't tell which state. He flipped through the scrapbook so fast. But, when he got to the rent recipts for the penthouses, he slowed down—it was a penthouse in Dallas, "The Big D" the receipt said. It cost him $2,500 for a deposit.

It was all there. The marquee clippings from the McCambo, a nightclub in Montreal, the Flamingo in Las Vegas and from L'Hotel Pigalle in Quebec that billed the same Ink Spots as "Les Fabuleaux."

And, now the man, Billy Williams, who had been there for the rise and fall of the Ink Spots across the country and across three decades, walked over to an electronic monument of 1972 carrying a 78 rpm record with a chunk gone from some corner. The record, the victim of a thousand playings, filled the room with 30 years ago. The Decca record sang the words—"If I Didn't Care."

"It was the record that put us over. We thought the other side, "Whispering Grass," was going to be the hit," Willams said.

In another room in the 12-year-old gray, split level house, on a country road in Tolland, Willams father sat on the edge of the couch and watched the closing segments of the television soap opera, As the World Turns.

On weekends in a new lounge, The Office Cafe, in Vernon—the next town over—the black entertainer sits behind an organ in

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The Cafe crowd that comes in to sip drinks and listen to the sounds of the thirties, the forties and fifties are white.

The older ones come to hear their songs. The young ones come to hear "a new style in music," Williams kidded.

In between what Williams likes to call his 12-year "hiding out" period in ... on the ... the return of ... the 1950's, but that ... never happen. "The best th... could come out of it as a reunion," he says.

"I'd like to see Charlie — our old guitar p... er. I called him Pappy. He taught me everything," Williams ... He doesn't kn... but ...

FORMER INK SPOT BILLY WILLIAMS
. . . now playing organ in Rockville lounge

—[Times Staff Photo by Wayne Carter

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